

# The COMPASS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
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December 1938

“Gifts” for Old Age

The Credit Side of the Ledger

Standards: The Escape from Chaos

On the Radio

California Counts Its Social Workers

Report to Membership by the  
Executive Committee

Volume XX      Number 3

**F**ROM the midst of the disturbed social work scene the persistent concern with standards may sometimes seem a game fit only for the inmate of an ivory tower and social work provides few habitations of that character. Mr. Brownrigg shows that standards have been a necessary nuisance from early times and explains why for a profession they mark the way out to social order and social responsibility.

**T**HE Chapter Executive Secretary, that most desired of professional blessings, is introduced in her varied contributions to the Twin City Chapter by an appreciative Chapter Chairman, Mildred Thomson.

**"L**OOKING from the Inside Out" of the professional kaleidoscope, the observer sees the influence of the Association's activities in behalf of standards radiating beyond the bounds of its own membership and its membership's clients and improving the conditions under which social work services are performed. To those working in social work agencies without benefit of professional education the Association gives help not the less real for being indirect.

**"G**ROWING Up" creates problems for organizations as well as individuals. Perhaps half the solution lies in accepting the problems as natural and respectable in organizations as well as in children and in calmly providing for them as the NOPHN has done in periodic analyses of its own structure and functions.

**I**NTERPRETATION, like its twin Social Action, often baffles the most ardent. The Womans Press in furnishing a "blue-print" brings both interpretation and social action down to earth and shows how both must be built on foundations of patient preliminary work reassuringly akin to that social workers are trained to do in their other functions.

**O**UR cousins, the sociologists, have taught us to think in terms of cultural change. How is social work thinking to be affected by the new currents which the lively aged have disconcertingly set in motion throughout the land?

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## Looking from the Inside Out

Members of AASW Ask What the AASW Should Do for Social Workers Outside Its Ranks. Here Are Rough Answers Suggested by What the AASW Already Does According to Evidence Coming to the National Office.

It is to be remembered that the interest of the AASW is primarily in the welfare of clients to be served and in the persons serving them only to the degree that the welfare of the latter is an important condition to good service. It is also to be remembered that the very way in which the AASW is set up, *on the basis of membership requirements*, is deliberately calculated to make the possession of certain education an advantage to those in social work jobs and the lack of it a disadvantage. The justification for establishing such a discrimination as this can lie only in the conviction that adequate service to clients depends so directly on the possession of adequate equipment in those who serve them that ultimate security for the latter must rest in acquiring that equipment.

The following statements are subject to more qualification than is given them here. They are rough statements that do not take fully into account the fact that other professional influences than those of the AASW play their part in producing the results described. It should also be noted that the influence ascribed to the AASW is in reality often partial, uneven and imperfectly effective. Nevertheless the evidence in the National office files reveals the existence of this influence as far stronger and much more pervasive than the average member or group of members in any one place has any chance of realizing.

The membership requirements of the AASW exclude from membership those who are unwilling or unable to acquire a certain general and professional education. On the other hand the use of membership requirements performs a service for certain groups of persons not yet members of the AASW. The requirements furnish a trustworthy guide to college students and graduates wanting to know how to equip themselves for social work as a career. These requirements advise them on the basis of the best experience of those who have been in social work as to what courses will or will not properly equip them to become good social workers and to compete for good jobs in social work.

The requirements exercise a further influence in protecting the person seeking social work education from investing his time and money in doubtful education. The very existence of the requirements gives universities and colleges interested in providing courses and curricula for the training of social workers cause to consider whether these courses and curricula are in line with the best experience and the real needs of social work practice. Colleges and universities are quick to see that unless their courses meet the standard requirements, they will as institutions be handicapped in attracting students because such students cannot obtain credits toward AASW membership. An examination of the evidence in individual cases which comes to the National Office shows that more and more persons educating themselves for a social work career seek the guidance provided by the AASW requirements and that most schools attempting to educate for social work recognize a practical necessity for giving education acceptable to the AASW. Thus it is no exaggeration to say that the AASW requirements protect prospective social workers from wasting their time and money in useless education and protect as well schools inexperienced in teaching social work from pursuing false directions.

Another phase of the Association's interests has been conducive to bettering the conditions under which all persons in social work jobs must work. Through the Association's activities in the province of government and social work the recognition of public welfare needs and standards has been strengthened. The greater recognition of relief needs and relief standards has meant that all those in social work jobs work under increasingly better conditions. The more adequate the relief budget to the relief need the less likely are the dispensers of relief to be found wanting by the community in giving the services which the community expects them to render. The influence of the Association in this area has promoted the stabilization of relief

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## "Means of Support" for Old Age

The administration of old-age security in Missouri \* has been put in serious jeopardy by a decision from a Court of Appeals which held in its October term that income from a relative need not be considered in determining eligibility for old-age assistance. If the State Social Security Commission cannot exclude aged persons from assistance who have relatives able to support them, it is estimated that Missouri, which already has more recipients in proportion to its population than most states, will have to expect an increase in its pensioners for next year from 73,000 to 200,000, and, if the present average of \$20 per month per pension is maintained, a leap in costs for the biennium to 15 million dollars.

According to the record a Mr. Price applied for old-age assistance in his county which was denied. He lives with his wife who receives \$50 per month from a son-in-law and earns approximately \$5 per month by sewing. In his application Mr. Price stated that he was incapacitated from earning a livelihood and had not "sufficient income or other resources to provide a reasonable subsistence compatible with decency and health and is therefore without adequate means of support." He meets the eligibility requirements in regard to age, residence and property.

### *The Court Defines a Gift*

At a hearing before the State Social Security Commission the application was again denied on the grounds that no need had been established and that Mr. Price's allowance was more than sufficient to make him ineligible for old-age assistance. Following this, Mr. Price, through an attorney who happens to be his son-in-law, took the case to the Circuit Court which rendered a decision in his favor. The Court stated that the only question involved in the appeal was whether the applicant qualified or was disqualified because of having sufficient income or other resources to provide him a reasonable subsistence. Concerning the \$50 monthly al-

The old-age agitation threatens the balance between the parts of the social security program. What repercussions on traditional ideas which both the community and social work have held are such Court opinions as these likely to have?

lowance to Mrs. Price, the Court was of the opinion that this is to be considered a gift. "No contract exists for the payment of the money; no expectation or right of expectation exists as to its continuance; no legal or

moral right requires its continuance; and no understanding exists that it shall be so continued." The Court was of the further opinion that "the children or any other relative is not required to provide means of support or that if they do so by reason of their rela-

tion it does not prevent those who are qualified from being entitled to the benefits."

### *The Court Defines "Means of Support"*

The State Social Security Commission appealed from this decision to the Court of Appeals. This Court identified as the only question in the case that "as to whether the gift to the wife which is accepted by her and used to keep her husband alive would disqualify him from receiving assistance under the laws of Missouri." In its reasoning on this question the Court decided that the Missouri Act "cannot under any circumstances be construed to mean that gifts or donations from individuals or from public institutions could be in any way construed as *means of support*." In its opinion the Court notes that an inmate of a public institution may make application for benefits, and asks: "Under what reasoning could it be said that, because an individual has been helping a person in distress, that this disqualifies him, when on the other hand a public institution could help him and yet not disqualify him?"

Critics of the Court's decision point out that the law specifically states that benefits shall not be payable to a person residing in an institution until after that person ceases to be an inmate: logically, therefore, a person receiving aid from an individual may apply for benefits but not receive them until after the aid from the individual ceases. Since the Federal Act places eligibility on the basis of need, if the Missouri decision is upheld, the state may become ineligible to receive Federal funds for old-age assistance. Newspaper comments point out that the legislature obviously intended to put old-age assistance on a need

\* This statement on Missouri's problem is adapted from an article in *Building a Better State*, Missouri Association for Social Welfare, October 1938.

basis but that according to the Court ruling a person who was receiving \$1,000 a month from a son could have a pension. Until the State Supreme Court makes a final decision on some test case which the Social Security Commission of Missouri has asked the At-

torney General to get before the Court, the State Social Security Commission plans to abide by its previous policy of considering as resources any income received either by an individual or a couple where relatives or others are willing and able to support.

## *The Use of Standards in Civil Service\**

By William Brownrigg, Michigan State Personnel Director

A Civil Service administrator indicates the necessity out of which the use of standards arises in various walks of life. To the social worker troubled by scruples about a snobbery of standards he presents some arguments of practical need.

In approaching the problem of Professional Standards, it seems logical to begin with a basic definition of what a standard of any kind really is. Allow me to propose, as such a definition, that a standard is any measure of extent, quantity, quality or value, established by law or by general usage and consent. Such standards, in the exact sciences, have been known to exist since early Biblical times. Apparently, the first recorded standard in English history was that established by King Henry in 1120 for the linear yard, which the King defined as the exact length of his arm. About 1260, during the reign of Edward I, a group of North-German merchants, or "Moneyers," settled in England. At that time, each merchant or banker had his own coinage. The coinage of these North-German bankers (who were nicknamed "Easterlings"), because of its uniformity of weight and excellency, became the recognized standard of coinage of the time. Thus, according to legend, originated the familiar term "Sterling."

In the less exact sciences, the value of standards was also recognized early in our history. About 1300 A.D., a guild of English goldsmiths placed the figure of a leopard's head upon their products. This mark, which derived its name from Goldsmith's Hall, London, gave origin to the term Hallmark. The symbol of the leopard's head is still the official mark of the London Assay Office.

With the evolution of our civilization, the need for standards became more and more

pronounced, for, as our social and economic structure became more complex, it became increasingly difficult and finally impossible for the consumer to be acquainted with the personal reputations and craftsmanship of tradesmen, manufacturers, and those performing personal or professional services. The use of these early standards both in the trades and in the arts demonstrated the advantages and necessity for further standardization. This tendency continued until at present we are relying upon established standards in both the exact and inexact sciences to the point where they are in fact a basic foundation,—an absolute necessity of our present social and economic structure.

For the purpose of this discussion, professional standards may be defined roughly as recognized measures of quality or attainment as applied to men and women devoting themselves to the higher scientific pursuits. In a number of such professional activities, standards first established by the profession itself, and later enacted into law, play a forceful role in our society. In the fields of medicine and law, and to a lesser degree in engineering and accountancy, practice of the profession is frequently limited quite exclusively to those of recognized and accredited professional standing and attainment. Although it has taken a long period of time and much education to develop the professional standards now in existence, the principles and utility of such standards are fundamentally sound and broadly recognized. Tendencies favoring the adoption of such standards in many other professional and sub-professional groups are pronounced.

In my own specialized field of public personnel administration, for example, standards for all occupational and professional groups are quite essential. We are concerned with hundreds of employment classifications, many of which are closely related. In solving employment problems involving every field of human endeavor from common labor to the

\* Paper delivered at Michigan Conference of Social Work, Lansing, September 30, 1938.

highest professional activities, we are required to lean heavily upon such accepted terminology and standards as are in existence, and when established standards do not exist, we must create them for our own use. In discussing staff problems with administrators, in dealing with budgetary problems with financial authorities and legislative bodies, in court actions, in examinations to fill vacancies, in measuring the capacities of employees, and in developing compensation rates and schedules, uniform, standardized terminology as to definitions of classifications, standardized duties and techniques, and recognized trade practices and procedures are essential.

The reasons for the origin of professional standards are interesting. It would appear that the element of self-preservation for the profession first motivates the establishment of professional standards. The Hallmarking of legitimate practitioners differentiates the ethical from the quacks, and protects the profession from criticisms resulting from failures due to unscientific and unsound practices.

This protection of the profession is, however, by no means the only beneficial result of the establishment of such professional standards either to the profession or to society. From a social standpoint, the protection of the public resulting from the establishment and recognition of such standards and resultant codes of ethics is of primary importance. The general advancement of the science through the development of standard terminology and technique, the pooling of resources and knowledge, and the furtherance of the science through organized research and the development of professional literature in the particular field, must also be credited at least indirectly to the establishment of professional standards. While not so obvious as the protection of the profession against the criticism resulting from the practice of quacks, these factors are, nevertheless, quite as important.

All sound efforts toward the development of professional standards are welcomed and encouraged by Civil Service administrators and technicians. The establishment of standardized terminology by professional groups provides means for a universal understanding of definitions not otherwise possible. Standards of education and experience established by professional groups not only simplify civil service recruiting problems in their fields, but offer parallels to be followed by personnel agencies in setting educational and experience qualifications for comparable activities in fields not yet so highly professionalized. The acceptance by the public of

well-defined educational and experience requirements for professional groups also affords a sound and effective defense for the application of similar requirements to other occupations and professions.

In civil service recruiting procedures, the standardized techniques and principles developed by the professional groups are of great assistance in constructing examinations, and in certain professions, their own tests for professional registration are valuable aids in the recruiting process. Some civil service agencies are accepting professional standards of accredited societies and governmental agencies in lieu of tests to determine basic professional qualifications. As the trend toward reliable professional standards develops, this tendency of civil service agencies to accept such standards in lieu of tests for basic knowledges and abilities will progress, with pronounced economies and accepted reliability and confidence.

There can be no question as to the desirability of the establishment of sound professional standards for those employed in many of the higher scientific fields. The protection of the sciences and the public against unethical and unsound practices, the raising of ethical standards, and the advancement of the sciences through coordinated research which invariably result from the establishment of such standards, more than justified the movement. The question arises how far should this movement toward professionalization extend, when is a science developed to a point where professionalization is desirable?

It is a little difficult to find a direct answer to this question, but it would appear that professional standards become desirable: first, as the work of a science comes to involve the public interest and welfare; second, as principles and techniques develop and crystallize; third, as a definite literature in the science is created; fourth, as ethical standards become essential for the protection of the science and the public; fifth, as standardization of terminology, procedures and techniques become necessary; and sixth, as further scientific development and research in the field are needed.

Under these simple and, I believe, sound rules, there can be no question but that the time has long since arrived for the full recognition of professional standards in the field of social work. Your activities concern the public interest,—if those of any science do. Specialized principles and techniques have crystallized. A host of literature in social science has been created. Ethical stand-

ards are essential for the protection of the public, and the science. Standardization of terminology, procedures and techniques, is necessary, and further scientific research is needed.

What, then, about civil service procedures and their relationship to your problem of professionalization?

The foundation of any sound civil service system is a classification plan. Such a plan consists of a series of specific and well-defined levels of occupational or professional activities or attainments. To each such level is assigned a class title, and for each is written a document called a "class specification." These class specifications consist, generally, of three parts, first, a concise definition of the duties and responsibilities to be assumed by persons working in the class or professional level, second, a list of typical duties to be performed, and third, a carefully prepared statement of the qualifications required of persons professionally fitted to perform the duties and assume the responsibilities specified.

These qualification requirements are usually expressed in terms of training (or education), experience, specific knowledges, abilities, aptitudes and personal and physical characteristics or attributes.

Such "class specifications" are used by civil service agencies as a basis for all personnel transactions and activities. They are referred to in considering transfers, promotions, demotions, and the filling of new positions. They are the creed of the civil service examiner, and the very foundation of every test used in the entire recruiting process, both open competitive and promotional.

In the preparation of such class specifications, every intelligently operated civil service

agency actively seeks the assistance and co-operation of recognized authorities in the field for which specifications are being written.

While it is not always possible, because of restrictions of the civil service law, certain principles of personnel administration, and occasionally strong prejudices in the particular jurisdiction, to adopt all of the standards proposed by the professional group, you will find civil service technicians anxious to comply with the desires of the profession to the fullest possible extent.

Through the techniques of civil service administration, therefore, you have ready made machinery available not only for the recognition of professional standards but for actually and effectively putting such standards into hard and fast, practical application. Once civil service specifications are established for an employment classification, they are rigidly applied, not only in recruiting procedures but in all personnel transactions.

I would not advise depending solely upon civil service, for the creation of professional standards, however, because of the limitations previously mentioned. Remember, the more firmly you are able to establish your standards through your professional societies and associations, and through the assistance and cooperation of the colleges and universities, the more completely they can be used and enforced by civil service agencies.

Depend upon it, however, that sound, honestly administered, civil service is a most effective and dependable vehicle through which to put your professional standards securely into operation. Without a civil service system through which to work, your task of making your professional standards effective is multiplied tenfold.

## *Report of the Executive Committee, December, 1938*

AT the regular meeting of the Executive Committee held in New York December 3-5, 1938, the situation and issues involved in the dismissal of Mrs. Florence Taylor from the national staff were taken under consideration. Mrs. Taylor was dismissed by the Executive Secretary in August 1938, following her refusal of a request to submit her resignation.

Certain questions regarding the dismissal having been brought to the attention of the President, he appointed a special fact-finding committee for the purpose of investigating the circumstances and reporting back to him and to the Executive Committee concerning the event. The charge to the committee was as follows:

The President has charged the Committee with obtaining from the Executive Secretary and the former members \* of the staff concerned factual material which would enable the Executive Committee to

\* There was at about the same time another dismissal from the staff, but it has been found that no issues were raised by this case.

determine the procedures leading up to the dismissals. He has also asked the Committee, in the process of this determination of the facts, to define and present issues which the Committee feels the President may submit to the Executive Committee for its consideration. In accordance with the present charge the Committee will not make any recommendations or arrive at any conclusions other than the establishment of the facts relating to the dismissals.

That committee, consisting of Frances Taussig, Linton B. Swift, Frederick I. Daniels, Stanley B. Davies, and Joseph Tufts, which met a number of times in New York City, heard testimony from Mr. West and Mrs. Taylor and prepared a report which was presented at the meeting of the Executive Committee December 3-5. The fact-finding committee, after examining the facts with regard to the dismissal, came to the conclusion that the major issue was that indicated by Mrs. Taylor herself, namely, the committee relationships and organizational policies involved. The Executive Committee wishes to express its appreciation for the thoroughgoing examination which was made by the fact-finding committee and for the way in which they focussed the broad issues of the case.

No question has been raised concerning the authority of the Executive Secretary under existing regulations, nor did Mrs. Taylor request any consideration of her reinstatement or of the practices connected with the dismissal. However, Mrs. Taylor did emphasize to the Executive Committee that her refusal to resign was on the ground that her separation from the staff involved basic issues of principle which she thought should come to the attention of the Association.

The Executive Committee found that the situation grew out of a number of basic shortcomings in the organization of the Association. It seemed to the committee that there was no point to be gained in prolonging the incident or in assigning degree of blame to any of the participants. The committee preferred to concentrate attention on the basic issues of organization and policy which were inherent in the situation.

During the meetings the Executive Committee heard additional testimony from Mrs. Taylor and Mr. West, and also from Mr. Wilbur Newstetter, chairman of the Subcommittee on Section 6, who discussed problems of relationship involving national committees, the Executive Committee, and the Executive Secretary.

The Executive Committee considers that the outstanding issues in the situation are as follows:

1. The Executive Committee is the governing body of the Association and in the past it has not properly exercised that function, leaving too much responsibility for decisions to the Executive Secretary.
2. Infrequency of meetings of the Executive Committee and lack of continuing machinery have caused prolonged delays in consideration of many important policy matters; in this connection the Ad Interim Committee had not proved to be a satisfactory device.
3. Work of committees of the Association has been loosely organized in relation to the national staff, the Executive Committee, and each other.
4. No formal and approved plan of personnel practices has ever been established for the national office.
5. The Executive Committee has been made keenly aware of the volume of work which must be carried by the national staff and the difficulties which necessarily result from inability to carry forward on all fronts in a satisfactory fashion.
6. Underlying this whole situation is a fundamental difference of opinion among the membership itself concerning the basic policies and program of the Association which naturally leads to confusion as to the direction in which national staff should operate.

In consideration of these basic issues the Executive Committee proceeded to take such action as was seen in keeping with the proposals already initiated at the last Delegate Conference or which would be a starting point toward solution on a broad basis for these problems. Accordingly, after extensive discussion the following actions were taken by the Executive Committee:

- I. The power of staff selection, management, discharge shall be vested in the Executive Secretary whose action on major matters shall be taken by and with the consent of the Executive Committee.
- II. The Ad Interim Committee shall be abolished and a standing committee of seven known as the Administrative Committee shall be elected annually by the Executive Committee from its own membership. The President of the AASW shall be chairman of this committee which shall meet approximately once a month upon call of the President. The Administrative Committee is charged with the responsibility formerly vested in the Ad Interim Committee, namely, the responsibility for acting for the Executive Committee between meetings of the latter, subject to general policies or specific direction of the Executive Committee; responsibility for administering the budget with the understanding that revisions may be made which do not impair the balances as authorized by the Executive Committee, providing the purpose of such revisions is in line with established policies of the Executive Committee; and responsibility stated in I, above, as well as such other delegated responsibilities as the Executive Committee shall from time to time decide upon. Members of the Administrative Committee shall continue to serve until their successors are elected.
- III. The Executive Committee shall provide for the appointment of a special Personnel Practices Committee from the members of the staff and the Executive Committee. The staff shall be represented by the Executive Secretary, and representatives elected from the professional and

clerical staffs. The Committee shall propose at the next meeting of the Executive Committee a plan for personnel practices and an appeals procedure for the national office.

IV. A special committee on conference proposals was appointed, with Mr. Linton Swift as chairman, plus Miss Lowry and Mr. Nichols of the Executive Committee, plus representation from the Committee on Structure and Participation to be selected by the chairman of the special committee in consultation with the President. The committee shall have the responsibility of formulating proposals to carry out the mandates to the Executive Committee from the 1938 Delegate Conference, relating thereto the action taken in this meeting of the Executive Committee.

The special committee shall have power to create sub-committees, drawing in such additional members as can facilitate its work, and shall submit a preliminary draft of its report, including recommendations for changes in the by-laws, to the Executive Committee at its next meeting, and shall then on behalf of the Executive Committee submit a final report to the 1939 Delegate Conference.

V. The membership of the Association is now studying the purpose, structure and organization looking forward to changes and modifications. In the meantime, believing that the AASW must be geared at all times to adjust its program to changing needs in the profession, the Executive Committee has directed the staff during this period to focus attention on the following matters which the Committee considers should have priority:

1. Making effective the functioning of the staff with the Administrative Committee, the Personnel Practices Committee, study of national office routine, and the new committee regulations.
2. Shaping up and securing action on resolutions adopted at the last Delegate Conference; and the organizing of committee work and other national office efforts to aid the membership and chapters in planning productive action at the 1939 Conference.
3. Early employment of an additional staff member with qualifications for work in relation to public welfare programs of the Association; such action to be taken up with the Administrative Committee as in I, above.
4. Special priority mention is made of membership matters, work on merit systems, professional education, and problems of chapter administration and programs. In establishing such priorities the Committee recognizes that some parts of the regular activities may have to be sacrificed to some extent.
5. The Executive Committee and the staff recognize that staff changes which in the past have been infrequent may be made more often in the future. With this understanding the Committee expresses confidence in the staff to serve the Association effectively until such changes occur as to require adjustments in the staff. Following the next Delegate Conference the Executive Committee shall re-evaluate the organizational set-up including staff in the light of any decisions made by the Conference.

VI. It is the sense of the Executive Committee that committee procedure should include the following provisions:

1. All standing committees shall be appointed by July 1st or as soon thereafter as possible.

These appointments and specific assignments of duties shall be made by the President and approved by the Executive Committee. All standing and special committee appointments shall expire on June 30th of each year or as soon as the successors are appointed.

2. All notices of appointment shall be made over the name of the President.
3. All committees shall make an annual report to the Executive Committee.
4. All subcommittees shall be appointed by committee chairmen subject to the approval of the President. Subcommittees shall in general report to the main committee but may report directly to the Executive Committee by agreement of the committee and subcommittee chairmen.
5. In the interim between Executive Committee meetings the new Administrative Committee shall be used extensively in arriving at prompt decisions regarding committee work, committee assignments and committee personnel.

VII. It is the sense of the Executive Committee that a reorganization of committee work may entail a revision of administrative procedures in the national office and that the President secure a competent administrative expert to study national office procedures on minutes, accounts, clerical assignments and other office routine in order to recommend a procedure on these matters which will facilitate and simplify their execution; this report to be submitted as soon as possible to the Executive Committee or its delegated group.

While the Executive Committee is by the constitution the governing body of the Association between delegate membership meetings, the fact remains that in these issues commented upon herein the vital test of whether they prove effective rests in the hands of the membership through the chapters. It is the Committee's opinion that it has created by its action a new and more vigorous procedure for the Association which is to go into effect immediately. If it is to prove successful the responsibility must rest not only with the Committee but with the chapters. It is the hope of the Executive Committee that the membership will exert every effort to think through chapter policies and programs, which inevitably will inure to the advancement of the total program of the Association.

### Acknowledgment

Now that the Executive Committee has passed on the issues concerning my dismissal of Mrs. Taylor from the staff, it becomes possible for me to acknowledge as I have wanted to do, the important work she has done for the Association during the past ten years.

After part-time work in 1927, Mrs. Taylor joined the staff early in 1928 to take responsibility for membership administration and editorial work on the COMPASS. Mrs. Taylor had carried, with some variation, these assignments since that time until August. Membership administration in the Association had no precedent which it could follow, and had to find its way by detailed inquiry, formula-

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# *Adjusting Structure and Function*

Another Professional Organization Diagnoses Itself and Recommends Treatment.

The AASW is not alone in its possession of what we so elegantly call problems of structure and function but which in their homelier guise are the problems of members lost in an outer void penetrated now and then by a bill for dues and a dull publication called the COMPASS; of committees puzzled about bringing an assignment down to earth; of program committees struggling to appease the unknown appetites of shifting chapter audiences; of chapter executive committees caught in the trap of small budgets and great ambitions.

These problems under the surface are no doubt peculiar in many ways to professional social work but in their more general guise are typical of the growing pains and childhood diseases which any professional group experiences in the early stages of its career. The AASW is not used to the notoriously difficult business of making itself over whereas an older organization like the National Organization for Public Health Nursing can proudly point out that "self analysis has always been traditional" \* and recall studies of function in 1917, 1922, 1926 as it reports on another begun in 1936 and finished in 1938.

Like the AASW, the NOPHN has been confronted with the extension of its work under public auspices, the problem of education and the impact of change in public attitudes. The Committee on Function which turned in its report in January 1938 had been appointed by the NOPHN to study and "if necessary, rechart its course so that it might bring the most effective service both to the public health nursing movement and to the individual nurse and agency at work in the field."

### *The Single Slate*

In considering the experience of the Nominating Committee with a double slate, the report recommended a return to the single slate: "This recommendation was a result of the difficulties involved in the present method, whereby the Nominating Committee strives to secure two names for every nomination, and not infrequently strives in vain. Take, for instance, the office

of president. With the growth of the Organization this position has become so demanding both as regards the qualifications required for the candidate and the amount of time that must be diverted from her own work for it, that it is a very difficult position to fill. . . . If one suitable person is found, ready and willing to run, the nominating committee considers itself fortunate. It is futile to ask a less desirable candidate to 'also run.' Sure defeat is hard for the candidate, and possible election, if the second choice is not equal to the position, is still harder than defeat, for both candidate and Organization."

In recommending the single slate for membership on the Board, the Committee states: "Again, as regards membership on the Board. The Nominating Committee with careful thought prepares a slate that not only represents the country geographically but is also representative of the varying interests of public health nursing and of suitable lay membership—and I assure you a balanced slate is not easy to work out—only to find its efforts unavailing because the voters are not thinking of balance, or because in so large and far-flung a constituency many of the names, and particularly those of the lay candidates, are unfamiliar, and only those persons whose names happen to have been heard of are elected. In recommending this change in the arrangement of the slate the Committee thought that democratic principles would not be sacrificed, or too great power vested in the Nominating Committee, if at the same time provision were made whereby any twenty-five members who did not care for the single candidate and who were united in wanting someone else were at liberty to place their candidate on the ticket."

### *Responsibility for Placement*

Reconsidering its own responsibility for professional placement, the committee found that the tie-up with social work in the Joint Vocational Service was of "no real advantage" to either group and that the best tie-up for public health nurses is with other members of their own profession. The report advised that a "special study be made of the national placement service best suited to so large a country—whether centralized, or acting

\* Report of the Functions Committee in Public Health Nursing, April 1938

through a network of approved bureaus" and adds that emphasis should be placed on "standard-setting for placement bureaus and on counseling through office and field service rather than on placement itself." In accordance with this recommendation from the Committee, the NOPHN has since proceeded

to give its official approval to the Nurse Placement Service in Chicago. Its national Committee on Vocational Counseling plans to concern itself with defining standards for placement bureaus and to encourage the development of acceptable regional services throughout the country.

## *California Counts Its Social Workers*

A serious stumbling block to professional planning for the improvement of social work personnel has been the absence of reliable facts. How many persons are employed in social work jobs? In what kinds of social agencies are they employed? What general education have they had? What professional education? What other special vocational training? In what positions are they employed? What salaries do they receive? How long have they worked on salary in social agencies?

Without facts such as these, professional strategy may remain unnecessarily timid, may be one-sided or irresponsibly unrealistic. The present need for more professional educational facilities cannot be gauged without reference to the general educational qualifications which social agencies are setting in recruiting personnel and to the salaries which they offer to personnel of different grades. Sound in-service training programs must take account both of the general educational and professional equipment of existing personnel. The complicated pros and cons of undergraduate training for social work must continue to be confused by lack of data about salaries and about the ability of public and private agencies to attract staff possessing college educations. In addition to all this is the practical question as to the supply which any state or region commands of professionally equipped persons to plan and carry through programs either of professional education or of in-service training. Are these persons qualified to teach technical social work courses and to conduct field work training for schools of social work? Who is there to take the essential supervisory and staff-teaching functions in in-service training?

The census of social workers in California \* was conducted not to answer these specific questions but to obtain factual information needed in planning for eventual state legislation for the registration and certification of social workers. In 1932 the Conference of

Social Work set up a department for the voluntary registration of social workers. After a blanketing-in period of about one year when only certain minimum qualifications had to be met, admission by examination and eligibility requirements began in June 1934. At the time the census was in process, the department had 1,662 members. The census which was made in April 1938 was planned to enumerate in California the social workers on salary in part-time or full-time employment and the social workers not then employed in social work but intending to return to this occupation. To a questionnaire covering fourteen items about education, work history, and present jobs, the census received 4,260 returns which it is estimated represents 90 per cent of social work in the state.

The agencies participating numbered 325 and of these more than two-thirds were private organizations but the individual returns from private agencies numbered only 17 per cent of the total. Thirty-nine per cent of the workers reporting were employed in the state relief agency and 31 per cent more belonged to the 46 county welfare agencies. Thirty-nine per cent of workers in public agencies possessed civil service status and most of these were employed in county set-ups. Women still predominate in California social work, making up 74 per cent of the total.

The picture of general education furnished by the census shows that in California a high general educational qualification is entitled to general social work support. Eighty-five per cent of the schedules showed some college education and of the total enumerated 64.8 per cent held college degrees. Significant of prevailing trends in standards is the evidence that federal and state employees have better general educations than those in county, municipal, and private agencies.

The data on professional education for social work revealed a percentage of 26.4 per cent who had had some graduate study in social work, 15.7 per cent undergraduate training, and 36.2 per cent extension or short

\* Published in pamphlet form by the California Conference of Social Work, 1938.

courses. In relation to general education, executives made a poorer showing than sub-executives or staff members but in respect to graduate study in social work the percentages favor executives and especially sub-executives over staff members.

The census shows that the salary problem in California is serious. The most frequent salary both for executives (14.9 per cent) and sub-executives (40.7 per cent) was in the \$150-\$174 per month without maintenance class and for staff members (68.1 per cent) in the \$100-\$124 without maintenance grouping. Receiving \$300 or over were 15.6 per cent of executives on full-time jobs and 1.1 per cent of sub-executives. More men than women earned salaries in the higher brackets. The private agency level was a step higher, the most frequent salary falling into the \$125-\$149 without maintenance class. In public agency positions 73.8 per cent of the staff workers got salaries without maintenance of less than \$125 per month.

Some measure of the expansion in public welfare services is indicated by the finding that 58 per cent of the 4,260 workers enumerated had been employed in social work less than 5 years. Geographically this personnel was highly concentrated, 73 per cent being found in the most populous counties, Alameda, Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco.

## A "Blue Print" for Interpretation

In the past various influences combined to limit the average social worker's direct experience with interpretation to the public and restrict the average social worker's interest in its professional development. Now that resistance to interpretation has broken down under the weight of a growing concern to make the knowledge of social workers serve society, we are hampered by the amateur's impatience to speak, write, or act before going through the processes of planning which are antecedent to effective speaking, writing, or action. We may even regard the expert's advice to plan first and act second as a denial of the obligation to engage in interpretation or social action.

Luckily for us, the groundwork for interpretation calls for a kind of analysis, "diagnosis" and planning familiar enough in other aspects of the social work job. Take, for instance, the elementary principles which Doris E. Fleischman and Edward L. Bernays set forth in an article addressed to the

YWCA.\* The authors show that interpretation must begin with an organization's making sure what its concrete objectives are. It is not sufficient to define them in the abstract: they must be hitched to reality. What is the organization specifically trying to do in the particular instance, why is it trying to do it, for whom is it trying to do it, "what modifications in thought and in actions" is it trying to bring about, and to what audience is it trying to appeal?

These are indispensable first steps. That they are indispensable makes more urgent the importance in the AASW, for example, of the present attempt to define the purposes and functions of the Association and more evident the related necessity for nailing them down to the concrete realities. But these are only first steps in a process. Arrows shot into the air are often arrows wastefully lost. Public opinion has to be studied. "Such study will be the testing ground as to whether your aims are realistic or not." Miss Fleischman and Mr. Bernays briefly indicate some of the elementary principles and practices for measuring public opinion. On careful analysis of the results of such measurements a practical reexamination and redirection of the earlier objectives must rest. Only after all this is done can an active campaign be responsibly started and carried out. As counsels on public relations the writers have practical advice to give on the working out of a program of interpretation and action. Their article is an exposition of ABC's which will not insult the intelligence of the thoughtful but instead will assist them to apply to problems of interpretation and social action principles and processes which they honor in other phases of social work operation.

## The Chapter Executive Secretary

One chapter after another has come to view the employment of an executive secretary as an administrative necessity. Last year the Twin City Chapter added itself to the list of chapters who ceased to rely totally on volunteer services. Through the pioneering of Miss Norma Moe, a student in the Graduate Course in Social Work, the chapter worked out what is now a very satisfactory conception of an executive secretary's functions. This year Mary Helen Merrill has been employed by the chapter as half-time secretary. Miss Merrill who is a junior member of the AASW has been a case worker and district

\* *A Blue Print for Successful YWCA Public Relations*, The Womans Press, December 1938.

secretary in the Family Welfare Association of Minneapolis, resigning this latter position in September to complete the work required for a master's degree at the University of Minnesota.

Mildred Thomson, the chairman of the Twin City Chapter, reports: "I do not believe that a chapter the size of Twin City Chapter could function satisfactorily without an executive secretary. I did not serve on the executive committee until last year, which was our first year with an executive. I did not come into office last year until October, and the full program was already outlined. Had it not been that the executive had all parts of the program so well in mind it would have been very difficult for me with a full-time job to have early acquired the full consciousness of what was going on that I did acquire."

"The executive secretary is not only responsible for the details of seeing that the various meetings are planned for and the various bulletins and notices mailed. Her responsibility is much greater. She attends the majority of the committee meetings and sections, and therefore comes to know personally a larger part of the membership. She is able to sense the trends of thought on matters directly connected with our organization as well as with the larger interest in matters of social importance. She is thus able to coordinate the thought of the various groups, to assist the executive committee and the organization to put before its members the questions in which they are most interested. She sees that there is some coordination between the different groups and varied interests. She thus stimulates interest where it might otherwise lag. She brings to any one committee not only discussions pertinent to its interests carried on by another group, but she brings to the organization outside contacts and thus, I believe, quite definitely helps in enlarging our horizon as well as assisting in making the organization cohesive. Because of her knowledge of the interest of so many individuals, she can help the chairman in determining on committee appointments which in itself is of great importance.

"I can frankly state that had we not decided after a trial year with an executive secretary to continue in a second year I could not have faced a second year as chairman of the chapter. The smooth functioning of all the committees and the coordination of their discussions could not be obtained without some one person having the time and the interest to have personal touch with each and every one."

## For the Public Service

One of the many questions in which social work is involved is that of whether education for social work administration should be chiefly founded in education for social work or whether public administration demands a separate basic training for functions essentially the same no matter where they are performed. In the panel discussion\* held in December 1937 at a meeting of the American Political Science Association it was this latter concept of public administration which prevailed. It was agreed that "the student concentrating on the general staff and management phases of administration should at least be given sufficient work in the functional fields of public works, social service, and so on to familiarize himself with the coverage of these fields and their techniques" but in the discussion of the pros and cons of specialized training which the administrator needs for administrative competence in a functional field, it was evident that public administration was considered by the panel to be a professional field per se.

In accordance with this assumption is the graduate curriculum which is described as one which might "properly cover such subjects as administrative principles, organization, and management techniques; administrative and constitutional law; budgeting, general and cost accounting, procurement and supply; personnel administration; administrative and public reporting; planning; executive-legislative relations and legislative drafting; and research methodology with reference to government as a whole and to particular line and staff functions."

The panel furnished excellent arguments for university education as a prerequisite to public service careers, laying a welcome emphasis on the values of a broad cultural base and warning against a narrow vocational emphasis in undergraduate education. In addition it provided useful odd bits of information about directions which the movement within civil service has been taking to strengthen the quality of personnel. In New York City, for example, the Civil Service Commission is trying to combat the hoary traditions which keep standards of selection low. Such hurdles have to be overcome as the setting of an experience requirement for entrance to competition, assigning a heavy weight to practical experience as contrasted

\* *University Training for the Public Service.* Pamphlet No. 12. Published by the Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada, 1313 East 60th Street, Chicago.

with education, and giving written and oral tests a bias which favors experience rather than education. The same Commission, according to a statement made elsewhere in the discussion, has been recruiting college graduates for positions such as those of firemen in which the minimum qualifications for education have been low, and has tightened up on promotional examinations within the particular service in order to enable the better qualified to take first place on the promotional lists.

There is a supplement in which the need of definitions of various kinds of public service and public administrative jobs is urged. The pamphlet is worth reading not only for information about the ideas which are influencing education for public administration but for facts and arguments about the importance of general educational qualifications for positions in public service fields.

### Express Service

The national office has available three sets of the charts made up for the 1938 Delegate Conference, which have been used this autumn at 11 state conferences and 2 chapter meetings, and which are shipped upon request via express in specially constructed packing boxes. The national office also sends upon request such Association display material as pamphlets, lists of publications, and COMPASS reprints. There have been 40 requests this fall for this material, used primarily by the local chapters which manage the AASW booths at state conferences.

### Acknowledgment

(Continued from Page 9)

tion of orderly procedures, and their interpretation. Mrs. Taylor's effectiveness in creating an interest in the necessary technical issues and her talent for clear and courteous explanation established order and direction in the membership administration.

It is not possible by enumeration of qualities to convey to the membership an adequate picture of Mrs. Taylor's contribution. It is possible to say, however, that none of the reasons that made it necessary to adapt the total staff equipment to the program as it has been evolving, detracts in any way from the value of the services Mrs. Taylor has rendered, or from the regard the members of the staff had for her work.

WALTER WEST

### Prophets May Err\*

"Government aid to the needy is as old as government itself," according to the report on the work of the Emergency Relief Bureau which has just been issued by the Department of Public Welfare of New York City. "As modern industrial society replaced the old agricultural society, governments throughout the world were forced to provide against the growing insecurity of vast groups of people until today there are approximately one billion people covered by social insurance in some fifty countries throughout the civilized world."

"It is a matter of record," the report declares, "that aid to the needy is not accepted as a necessary or proper function of government by a considerable number of citizens, despite the realistic facts indicated by the relief rolls, the employment indices and the grave growth of insecurity among wage earners."

"It is also a matter of record that there was opposition to the abolition of the 12-hour day, to mothers' pension laws, to universal education, to workmen's compensation, and other social changes.

"Those who opposed the suggestion that twelve hours labor daily was too much, warned that men would grow lazy and indifferent with shorter working hours. Opponents of the widows' pension legislation forecast murders of husbands by wives seeking the pension grants. Men would mutilate themselves to obtain industrial accident compensation, hostile critics predicted. The antagonists of universal education declared that if free education were extended, everybody would be educated and no one would work, except at the most pleasant tasks. Today, critics of unemployment relief contend that unless public aid is discontinued, millions of people now on relief will never get off, and America will become a nation of work-shy citizens.

"Experience shows that the eight-hour day has not ruined American workers. There is no evidence that wives have done away with their husbands to collect widows' pension allowances. As yet we are not a mutilated race as a result of the operation of workmen's compensation. Instead of widespread educational opportunities making our young people avoid hard work, the college graduate starting at the bottom of the ladder has almost become an American tradition. Rather than

\* From the report of the Home Relief Division of the Department of Welfare of the City of New York, November 1938.

preference for home relief, the great majority of recipients regard it as a necessary evil. Every year relief rolls show a considerable turnover. This is evidenced by the closing out of an average of 65,584 cases to private industry and an average of 34,873 cases to WPA."

## Professional Teamwork and Civil Service

The September Bulletin of the American Association of Medical Social Workers carries two excellent papers on a cooperative venture between the Los Angeles County Civil Service Commission and professional social work as represented by members from three professional associations—the American Associations of Medical Social Workers, Social Workers, and Psychiatric Social Workers. The two articles by Clifford N. Amsden, chief examiner of the Commission, and Leonora B. Rubinow, of the AASW and AAMSW, furnish satisfying accounts of an enterprise notable on a number of scores.

Not least of the Joint Committee's achievements was the first and essential discovery that civil service officials and professional social workers have a common unsolved problem in maintaining standards through examinations for social work positions and that this problem can be openly discussed. The realism which characterized this process is indicated by the recognition which was given to the Commission's difficulty in recruiting qualified personnel in the face of a lack of trained workers and facilities for training them; moreover it was admitted that there existed a group of workers who though they failed in examinations would remain in social work.

Another signal achievement was the initiation and continuation of joint work by these professional groups of social workers, and along with this the development of small working committees on medical, psychiatric and family case work. The combination of professional efforts undoubtedly derived its first justification from practical considerations of the greater prestige attached to recommendations proceeding not from one but three different groups. Its more fundamental significance lies however in the discovery of a common base in social work values and objectives and the use of that base for the support of standards in each specific field.

Both Mr. Amsden and Miss Rubinow retrace the process through which the Committee has gone in its study of examinations

and give the reader an opportunity to experience a sense of that adventure which rewards a real acceptance of professional responsibility.

## Youth Commission Seeks Chapter Opinion

In October the American Youth Commission asked the national office for a list of the chairmen of the various chapters whom it might consult in formulating during the next ten months a specific practical program for the care and education of American youth. Realizing that effective plans must take into account activities already under way or projected in particular areas, the Commission wants the opinion of the chapters on next steps in their respective states and jurisdictions.

The ten-months' study will be directed to finding out what method of procedure is best adapted to the needs of each state and best calculated to effect prompt and constructive action. Among the various methods possibly to be considered are the setting up of special state youth commissions appointed by legislative or executive action or councils of representatives of influential citizen groups. In its December Bulletin, the Commission makes its first public announcement of this plan to put to use the findings which it has accumulated and of the appointment of three special assistants. Their function will be to confer with key individuals in the many fields that deal directly with the needs of youth.

In the same issue of the Bulletin appear new estimates of unemployment among youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four. Four and one-third million are wholly unemployed: of these over half a million are engaged in emergency work of some sort. In addition, a million and a half have some employment of a non-emergency character and may be described as part-time unemployed. A noteworthy fact is that only 13 per cent of the youth who have no work or only emergency work are not actively seeking employment. The ratio of unemployment is inverse to age and the degree of unemployment for boys and girls is equal. Two-fifths of all youth are not available for employment. This category includes four and three-quarter million who are in school, two and three-quarter million who are home makers, one-half million unemployed, wanting work, but not actively hunting for it and one-half million

who consist largely of unpaid family workers plus those physically incapacitated for work. These figures are based on the unemployment Census of November 1937 supplemented by an Enumeration Check which covered over one-half million families in all parts of the country: this latter ranks as one of the largest surveys ever made of a representative sample of the youth population.

## Index of Research Projects

The Index of Research Projects which has been prepared by the Works Progress Administration to make available the results of its research activities is intended to serve as a research tool and save duplication and overlapping in scientific investigations. The Administration announces that the supply of this Index is limited and is meant for those with a serious interest in research.

## Looking from the Inside Out

(Continued from Page 3)

budgets and therefore the stabilization of relief administrations; it has also protected those holding relief-giving jobs from as many destructive reductions and "reorganizations" as would otherwise occur.

Within the chapter areas the interest of members in protecting relief-giving agencies from political interference and attack has strengthened those civic influences which alone could ward off or affect the direction of political investigations calculated to bring those in public agency jobs into disrepute, threaten their tenure in their jobs and prevent them from getting proper compensation or proper working conditions in the face of an alienated and suspicious public opinion.

The Association through its study of the factors to be considered in good employment practices has developed an increasing recognition of and respect for the importance of such practices by those responsible for the operation of social agencies. The work of the Association in this area has been making an increasingly strong appeal to administrators to see that it is to the interest of themselves and their agencies to observe elementary generally accepted standards of employment practices. Acceptable employment practices are becoming a factor to be considered by the agency in obtaining support of its program, maintaining its reputation for effective

work, and being able to compete with other agencies in the social work labor market. The Statement About Standard Employment Practices has further strengthened the hands of all social work administrators by giving them principles to which they can refer in presenting to their Boards proposals for the improvement of the agency's employment practices and conditions.

The Association through its interest in working for civil service and other merit systems has contributed to the protection of all persons in social work jobs from the political manipulations against which such civil service and other merit systems are recognized safeguards. The Association's progress in this area has been slow but is susceptible to an indefinite future development because the Association is looked to by progressive civil service administrators as the main source of assistance to them in working out civil service standards and procedures for public welfare services.

An area of AASW activity of enormous importance to all persons in social work jobs is that of in-service training which emphasizes the obligation especially of public agencies to build up resources whereby their staffs may be trained to perform better the services which are the public agencies' reasons for existence. The AASW has as yet only touched the problems of in-service training. It seems clear however that an organization of professional social workers might progressively contribute to the strengthening and effectiveness of in-service training first by distinguishing clearly between in-service training and professional education, and second, by crystallizing out of total social work experience whatever help may be given in assisting in-service training programs to escape the avoidable weaknesses and deficiencies which characterized the now outmoded apprenticeship system of training. For the AASW there lies ahead the challenging job of identifying the elements essential to good training for performance on a craft level and building them into in-service training programs.

In asking ourselves what the AASW *should* do for social workers outside its ranks, we need to recognize and examine what the AASW is already doing. The improvement and extension of this contribution depends on the willingness of individual members of the AASW to engage in the work involved and to organize whatever they have been privileged to know and learn for use in behalf of those denied this privilege.

G. F. M.